Aspect and Modality in Luchuan --- In The Case of The *Shuri* dialect ---

Tomoko ARAKAKI

1. Background

Luchuan is a language spoken on the islands of the Ryukyus (Okinawa prefecture), the southernmost islands of Japan. It is generally accepted that Luchuan is a sister language of Japanese; they are estimated to have split off from each other about 2000 years ago. The contemporary dialects of Luchuan are divided into three large groups, and these three dialects are mutually unintelligible. I limit the data in this paper to one of these dialects, the *Shuri* dialect. It is regarded as a standard language of the Ryukyus.[1] As Luchuan does not have a written form, the data is spoken only.[2]

2. Outline

In this paper, I will focus on phenomena in Luchuan which can be regarded as a subject restriction depending on verbal morphology.[3] In particular, the morpheme -***u***- appears only if the subject is non-first person. Conversely, there is another morpheme -***a***-, which typically occurs only with a first person. I will attempt to account for these phenomena by appealing to the concept of 'evidential' rather than by analysing this as an instance of simple syntactic agreement. Essentially, the morpheme -***a***- is used to imply direct experience, and the morpheme -***u***- indicates witness.

First, I briefly introduce four verb forms, and focus on two forms which contain the morphemes -***a***- and -***u***-.

3. General Information

There are four forms that can be used to refer to past events.[4]

(1)a wan-nee tigami kac-***a***-n.
I-Top letter write-PAST-M ' I wrote a letter.'

b. are-e tigami kac-***u***-ta-n.
he-Top letter write-U-PAST-M 'He wrote/was writing a letter.'

c. are-e tigami kac-***ee***-n.
he-Top letter write-PERFECT-M 'He has written a letter.'

d. are-e tigami kac-***oo***-t-a-n.
he -Top letter write-Impf.-PAST-M 'He was writing a letter.'

(1a) is a simple past. The gloss M shows mood: this suffix -*n* is used in indicative mood. Basically, (1b) is an imperfective. This means it indicates neither initial nor

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[1] The population of Okinawa is about 1.3 million. The accurate number of native speakers is not reported, but it might be at most half of the population. Younger generations cannot even understand Luchuan. It is a moribund language.

[2] This paper is based on data collected by field work which I did in September 1999.

[3] The argument concerning the definition of subject in Japanese has been discussed by many researchers and similar issues arise in Luchuan. See for example Shibatani 1990. For the purposes of this paper, it is enough to note that the subject of the verb may be marked as the topic of the sentence.

[4] I focus on these four inflectional forms and will not deal with other aspectual forms, eg.,so called compound verbs such as *kaci-uwajun* 'finish writing' in this paper.

final endpoints. (1c) is a perfect, but its use is limited to the resultative. It cannot express experience and recent past, unlike the English perfect. Though the meaning of (1d) corresponds roughly to a progressive in English, this morpheme -*oo*- is not exactly equivalent to the English progressive in that it can be used with non-dynamic verbs, namely States, such as *know* and *love*.

In the following discussion, I will focus on the sentences containing verb forms with the morpheme -***a***- and -***u***- as (1a) and (1b).

3.1 The morpheme –***a***-

The morpheme –***a***- generally tends only to occur with non-first person subjects, as shown in example (2a,b).

(2)a. wan-nee unu tigami kac-***a***-n.
I-Top this letter write-PAST-M 'I wrote this letter.'
b.?? are-e unu tigami kac-***a***-n.
he-Top this letter write-PAST-M 'He wrote this letter.'

The difference between (2a) and (2b) is whether the subject is the speaker him/herself or not. In other words, whether the subject is first person or not.[5] The unacceptability of (2b) can be explained by the hypothesis that the morpheme –***a***- expresses not only tense but also the speaker's direct experience.

Let us now examine the case in which the subject is second-person, namely, the addressee.

(3) ?? yaa-ya unu tigami kac-***a***-n.
you-Top this letter read-PAST-M 'You wrote this letter.'

Aa can be seen in (3), the sentence that contains the morpheme -***a***- with the second person is unnatural. When a speaker would like to convey meaning like '*you wrote this letter*', s/he would choose another morpheme -***u***-. I will return to this later.

In standard Japanese, there are similar phenomena. Sensations such as being hot, cold, or lonely are expressed as in (4a) when the experiencer is the speaker. However, sentence (4b) in which the experiencer is a third person are ungrammatical (Aoki 1986).

(4) a. *Atsu -i.* [Japanese]
hot -NP 'I am hot.'
b. **Kare wa atu -i.* [Japanese]
he T.M hot -NP 'He is hot.'[6]

Next, we need to consider if the same phenomena can be found in interrogative sentences. There are two relevant morphemes, *-i* and *–ga*. The former is a yes-no question marker as shown in (5), and the latter is a Wh-question marker as (6) illustrates.

(5) a. wan-nee unu syumuci yud-i?
I-Top this book read-Q 'Did I read this book?'
b. are-e unu syumuci yud-i?
he-Top this book read-Q 'Did he read this book?'
c. yaa-ya unu syumuci yud-i?
you-Top this book read-Q 'Did you read this book?'

(6) a. unu syumuci taa ga yud-a-ga?
this book who NM read-PAST-Q 'Who read this book?'
b. yaa unu syumuci ici yud-a-ga?

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[5] Shinzato (1991) also points out that this morpheme cooccurs only with first-person subject.

[6] Aoki's gloss. NP=nonpast suffix. T.M.=Topic marker.

you this book when read-PAST-Q 'When did you read this book?'
c. are-e ziru yud-a-ga?
he-Top which read-PAST-Q 'Which (book) did he read?'

(5)-(6) are all acceptable. This means that we cannot find any restriction in interrogative sentences. As can be seen in (5), the morpheme *–a* can not appear in yes-no questions.[7] While the acceptability of examples (6) shows that this morpheme appears in Wh-questions without maintaining the feature of direct-experience. One reason why the morpheme -***a***- expressing direct experience occurs only in declarative sentences might appear to come from a combination of the morphemes –***a***- and *–n*. The morpheme *–n* expressing indicative mood denotes the speaker's judgement on the proposition subjectively.[8] A combination of the speaker's direct experience and judgement probably might preclude a non-first person subject in indicative mood. The existence of the morpheme *–u* might seem to define the concept of direct experience as a fact. This calls for further consideration.

With respect to aspect, the morpheme -***a***- indicates Perfective viewpoint. It focuses on a situation in its entirety, including both initial and final endpoint (Smith 1997).

3.2 The morpheme –***u***-

The morpheme –***u***- appears in almost exactly the environments in which –***a***- is

impossible. More precisely, -***u***- does not appear with first person subjects as shown in (7a). However, if the morpheme -***u***- appears with a second or third person subject, like (7b) and (7c), these sentences are perfectly acceptable.

(7) a. *wan-nee kusui num-***u***-t-a-n.
I-Top medicine take-U-PAST-M 'I took medicine.'
b. are-e kusui num-***u***-t-a-n.
he-Top medicine take-U-PAST-M 'He took medicine.'
c. yaa-ya kusui num-***u***-t-a-n.
you-Top medicine take-U-PAST-M 'You took medicine.'

One might wonder if it is possible to consider that the difference in acceptability between -***a***- and -***u***- may be due to the difference between direct experience and indirect experience. As we will see however, this is not exactly the relevant distinction. Instead, I propose that the crucial factor is 'witness'. The morpheme -***u***- is used when the speaker states a particular proposition as a fact because the speaker has witnessed the event. Therefore, even in case (7b), if the speaker did not see the situation in which '*are*' (he) was taking medicine, (7b) is not acceptable. Even if there were strong evidence, for instance, an empty foil package of medicine, (7b) would not be appropriate. With respect to (7a), a speaker cannot objectively witness her/his own action. Instead of -***u***-, if -***a***- is used as in (8), it is consistent because it is the speaker's direct experience.

(8) wan-nee kusui nud-***a***-n. (cf.7a)
I-Top medicine take-PAST-M 'I took medicine.'

Next, I'd like to consider interrogative sentences. The following examples appear to support the concept of witness.

(9) a. wan-nee kusui num-***u***-t-i?
I-Top medicine take-U-PAST-Q 'Did I take medicine?'

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[7] We can distinguish interrogative sentence in the past and that in the non-past because there are differeces such as inflectional ending, the morpheme *–u* and question marker. Interrogative form in non-past is *jum-u-mi* (read).

[8] *Okinawago jiten* 'Dictionary of Luchuan' (1963).

b. are-e kusui num-***u***-t-i?
he-Top medicine take-U-PAST-Q 'Did he take medicine?'
c. *yaa-ya kusui num-***u***-t-i?
you-Top medicine take-U-PAST-Q 'Did you take medicine?'

Both (9a) and (9b) are acceptable, while (9c) is not. In a situation in which it would be appropriate to use an interrogative sentence, the speaker cannot be a witness. If s/he was, s/he would not have to ask someone a question to because s/he would already know the truth. Thus, the speaker must be asking whether the addressee witnessed the event. As I explained above, the person who acts, in this case taking medicine, cannot observe her/his own act. In other words, presumably (9c) might seem to be translated roughly into English as 'Did you see the situation (by your self) in which you took medicine?' Therefore, the situations in which (9a) is natural are quite limited. For instance, when the speaker cannot remember whether s/he took medicine or not. Suppose that (9a-c) can be paraphrased as follows.

(9a') Did you see (witness) me take medicine?
(9b') Did you see (witness) him take medicine?
(9c')#Did you see (witness) you take medicine?

The speaker ask the question in order to confirm whether an addressee witnessed the event or not. However, it does not mean that (9) and (9') expresses exactly same meaning. When we survey their differences, what has to be noticed is "negation". We must especially draw attention to the fact that (10c) does not have a corresponding negative form. Let us start by comparing the following three constructions. To make clear the agent, I substitute the boy's name 'Taro' for the third-person pronoun.

(10) a. Did Taro take medicine? (=9b)
b. Did you see Taro take medicine? (=9'b)
c. Taro-ja kusui num-***u***-t-i?
he-Top medicine take-U-Past-Q 'Did Taro take medicine? Did you see it?'

	(10a)		(10b)		(10c)	
Answer	yes	no	Yes	No	Yes	no
event	Affirm	Neg	n/a	n/a	Affirm	Neg
witness	n/a	n/a	Affirm	Neg	Affirm	*[Affirm]

Table 1. The scope of affirmative and negative
※ n/a : non-applicable

Table 1 shows how affirmative and negative is distributed in the three sentences of (10).

As can be seen in Table 1, the question or negation part of (10a) is event only. The slots of witness are marked non-applicable. Thus, it does not matter whether the addressee sees the event or not. The point to be asked or negated is whether the event happens or not.

(11) a. Did Taro take medicine? (=10a)
b. Yes, but I didn't see it.

(11b) affirms the fact that Taro took medicine but the addressee didn't witness it. It does
not lead to unacceptability. The Luchuan sentence (10c) behaves differently. The addressee is supposed to confirm that the event took place and that s/he saw it. That is why both event and witness slots in Table 1 are affirmative. The addressee cannot admit the event part but deny seeing it. As these two factors are important,

the sentence is only acceptable if these two factors are satisfied.

(12) a. Taro-ja kusui num-***u***-t-i ? (=10c)
Taro-Top medicine take-U-Past-Q
b. *unn, yasiga, nnd-an-ta-n.
yes but see-Neg-Past-M 'Yes. But I didn't see it.'

The addressee should determine her/his judgement based upon "witness". In this sense, (10b) behaves in a similar way to Luchuan because (10b) focuses on "witness". But in interrogative sentences, the interpretation of (10c) is not similar to (10b) any more. Table 1 shows that (10b) in negation does not negate the event but only the witness. Even if the addressee did not see the event, it might have taken place. (13) does not lead to any contradiction.

(13) a. Did you see Taro take medicine? (=10b)
b. No, but Taro took it (because I found the wrapper in the wastepaper bin).

However, if the addressee answers in the negative to the question (10c), this must entail that Taro did not take medicine.

(14) a. Taro-ya kusui num-***u***-t-i? (=10c)
Taro-Top medicine take-U-Past-Q 'Did Taro take medicine?
b. *nnnn, yasiga nud-ee-n. [9]
no but take-Reslt-M 'No, but he took it.

The addressee negates the event part by insisting on his/her evidence; "witness".[10] The scope of negation does not include the "witness" part. In other words, negation of the sentence amounts to negation of the event. If the addressee does not have such evidence, s/he should say 'I don't know' rather than use the negative. Hence, if the addressee answers in the negative to question (14a), the meaning of the sentence should be as shown in (15).

(15) No, Taro didn't take medicine. I knew about it by seeing that Taro didn't take
it.

To sum up, the negation of (10c) amounts to the statement "I saw an event of Taro not taking medicine. One might assume that it is impossible to witness a "negative event". Thus the morpheme ***–u***- does not have a negative form because one cannot witness an event that does not happen.

As for as aspect is concerned, basically, the morpheme -***u***- shows Imperfective viewpoint. It focuses on part of a situation, including neither initial nor final endpoint (Smith 1997).

3.3 The morpheme -***u***- as a non-past tense

The morpheme -***u***- can also appears in the non-past tense form. It can cooccur with any person because here it seems to indicate neither witness nor direct experience.

(16) a. wan-nee kusui num-***u***-n.
I-Top medicine take-U-M 'I take medicine.'
b. are-e kusui num-***u***-n.
he-Top medicine take-U-M 'He takes medicine.'
c. yaa-ya kusui num-***u***-n.

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[9] To be precise, pronunciation of *unn* 'yes' and *nnnn* 'no' is uvular nasal. These two words are different in that the former begins with glottal stop but the latter does not. Although in Luchuan, glottal stop is distinctive feature, I do not indicate it in this paper because it doesn't influence the discussion.

[10] If the addressee knows Taro took medicine, but didn't see it, s/he will choose Resultative (*nudeen*). The information that Taro took medicine should be something reliable (e.g. Taro's notes, hearsay).

you-Top medicine take-U-M 'You take medicine.'

It remains an unsettled question why this morpheme in non-past does not encode factors such as direct experience or witness. There are probably some reasons/factors to explain it, but at this point I will leave this problem to another opportunity. What I now can say is that -***u***- in the non-past tense shares a feature with the Past -***u***-. For example, both convey information as to whether the agent's act can or could be realized.

(17) a. John-ja nama muno-o kam-***u***-n.
John-Top now meal eat-U-M 'John can eat a meal.'
b. John-ja muno-o kam-***u***-t-a-n.
John-Top meal eat-U-PAST-M '(I saw that) John ate/was eating a meal.'

(17a) should not be interpreted as future or habit. (17a) is appropriate in a situation in which John could not eat well because of illness or something, but he now recovers and can eat a meal as usual.' The speaker utters (17a) if it is obvious that he is able to actually see the situation, which John eats his meal (because the speaker knows about John's recovery.)

4. Cases in which both –***a***- and –***u***- are acceptable

4.1 [-animate] subject

So far, I have provided data related to subject restrictions. The question I must consider next is the data which does not contain [+ human] subject. Let us examine the examples in which [-animate] appears in subject position as in (18).

(18) a. cinuu ami nu hut-***a***-n.
yesterday rain NM rain-PAST-M 'It rained yesterday.'
b.cinuu ami nu huj-***u***-t-a-n.
yesterday rain NM rain-U-PAST-M 'It rained/was raining yesterday.'

If the speaker knows that it rained, (18a) is appropriate. However, if the speaker utters (18b), he should know it through his actual perception. It means that witness is still an important factor to confirm that events took place as a fact.

Moreover, there is also a distinction of aspect. (18a) is a perfective and (18b) is imperfective.(18a) expresses the fact as a completed single whole. On the other hand, (18b) describes an event as it has internal structure. To put it another way, (18b) focuses on the fact that the speaker observed the moment of raining.

4.2 Verbs like *think*, *know*

Next, I will give examples that allow both morphemes even if the subject is first
person.

(19) a. wan-nee [unu hanash-ee yukushi] nri umut-***a***-n.
I-Top the story-Top false that think-PAST-M
'I thought that the story was false.'
b. wan-nee [unu hanash-ee yukushi] nri umuy-***u***-t-a-n.
I-Top the story-Top false that think-U-PAST-M
'I thought that the story was false.'

In the data we examined so far, a first-person subject cannot cooccur with the morpheme -***u***-. But (19b) is perfectly acceptable in spite of their cooccurrence. The translations in (19a) and (19b) are the same, but to be precise, there is a subtle difference in nuance between them. (19b) would be preferred if the speaker recalls the moment when s/he thought the story was false as if s/he reviews his/her own thought. (19b) tends especially to be chosen when the speaker has changed his/her mind. In this way, if I assume that the concept of witness is shifted to 'observe' in a more abstract sense, I might say that the speaker observes his feeling or thought in the past objectively.

4.3 Past habit

A similar explanation is possible for the examples.

(20) a. wan-nee cinuu haru nkai nz-***a***-n.
I-Top yesterday farm to go-PAST-M 'I went to the farm yesterday.'

b.*wan-nee cinuu haru nkai ic-***u***-t-a-n.
I-Top yesterday farm to go-U-PAST-M 'I went to the farm yesterday.'

c .wan-nee wakasa-ru tuci-nee meenaci haru nkai ic-***u***-t-a-n.
I-Top young when-Top everyday farm to go-U-PAST-M
'When I was young, I used to go to the farm everyday.'

(20a) is OK because of speaker's direct experience, while (20b) is ungrammatical because, as I said, -***u***- cannot cooccur with first person except for the verb expressing unaccessible knowledge or thought to others as (19). However, the ungrammatical becomes grammatical when there is a shift in time away from the time of speaking as in (20c). If I apply the previous explanation to (20c), it becomes grammatical because the speaker observes his own act in the past objectively by shifting the point of view toward the past.

I now return to (20b) again to consider why this kind of shifting point of view takes place. (20b) is not acceptable because the morpheme -***u***- cannot appear if it is the speaker's single action, or if it is just past individual action. The action should have been repeated as past habit. It may recall 'used to' in English. However, (20c) implies that the action used to be repeated, but it is not repeated anymore. In similar way, (19b) is often used when the speaker's thought or belief have been changed. Indeed conjunctions such as 'but' or 'however' tend to follow it. For example, 'I thought that the story was false, but I think it is true now'. Such a contrast between past and present situations may probably make it possible to turn the speaker into the observer.

5. Conclusion

So far, I've tried to make clear the function of two morphemes; -***a***- and -***u***-. As we have seen, in Luchuan, the notion of "evidentiality" is an important factor to determine the appropriate verbal morpheme. Even the examples (19) and (20) are not just exceptions or counterexamples, but these sentenses share features such as "witness" and "observation". I will summarize the points I have made in this paper as follows.

1. The morpheme –***a***- implies direct experience when the subject is speaker.
2. The morpheme –***u***- indicates speaker's or addressee's witness. In declarative sentence, it expresses speaker's witness, In contrast, it requires addressee's witness in interrogative sentences.
3. When the morpheme –***u***- allows the appearance of a first person subject, the speaker must observe his thought or past habit objectively.

	Tense	Aspect	Evidential
-***a***-	Past	Perfective	Direct experience
-***u***-	--	Imperfective	Witness/observe

Table 2.

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